

## Consistency & The Spirit of Conflict

*Origin/Background of Story.* Is it ok to be trustworthy sometimes and a snake at other times?

Use context and Etymology clues to unlock the meaning of these new vocabulary words: *facetious, fastidious, fatuous, garrulous, gregarious, ingenious, incommodious, invidious, notorious, nefarious, innocuous*

Well, you see, there was Tre...and there was *Tre*. Tre was a **fastidious** scholar, a perfectionist, who paid the finest of attention to every detail of his work. He would not submit a single test nor a single essay, without double and triple checking for spelling, flow, and accuracy. **Ingenious** as he was, he would always **instinctively** find the most clever observation in any reading, any film they would examine - and then use that observation to construct a solution so **profound**, it would startle even the elders. Mama Ayo was so proud of this Tre. Baba Geo knew he carried the mark of a man only destined for success.

But you see, then, there was *Tre*. A **gregarious** young man, he liked to be around company, in the center of it, rather. But that wasn't the issue. And neither was he **garrulous** in nature; he wasn't much of a talkative person either. You see, *Tre* was **notorious** among his peers for being the fire-starter, the ultimate **sicer** when things were about to go over the edge.

"Oh you just gonna let him cold stare at you like that, though?" Tray remarked **invidiously** in the lunchroom, at the two beefing scholars. Quite a **nefarious** soul he was in the lunchroom, on the playground.

Marked by the spirit of **Eshu**, this young man fed off of conflict, always ready for it, and even some part of him would want to create it if it wasn't there. It was as if he had another organ inside of him that fed off of drama. This was *Tre*.

"Alright, I'm going to step out for a moment to talk to the Principal, please be still," Baba Geo told the drumming class. It didn't take him but a moment for that itch, that **penchant** for mischief to set in, and *Tre's* hands just so happened to strike that drum so fiercely, it startled even his peers who knew him far too well. They laughed though, and that's really what he was going for. But he didn't know what they would say about him when he wasn't there. Shoot, any fool could tell you what they would say about him. But *Tre*, he didn't get it. He didn't see what he was doing to his environment, how **incommodious** he was making it, for everyone. All *Tre* knew was that he had an itch.

"I wouldn't trust that boy as far as I could throw," one of the sisters in his class said. His peers nodded, rolling their eyes. That *Tre*.

"A shame what a compromise of talent," the Principal thought, in eye-shot of the unrequested drummer, "Wouldn't even carry my wallet around that kid."

One day, when the high school recruiters came to get the teachers' recommendations, they asked Mama Ayo and Baba Geo about the Honor Roll scholar whose grades stood

out above the rest: Tre Watkins. But Ayo and Geo simply shook their heads. "You don't want that confusion," Ayo said, and they turned the page. 50

Tre didn't know about that. In his mind, it was all **innocuous** fun; just an itch he had to scratch, no harm done, a little entertainment for the people. In his mind perhaps he had fashioned himself as a savior from the boredom and the **monotony** of **righteousness**. 55 And in his mind, the people that mattered knew what really mattered. His grades. And he was on top of that. Everything else was **fatuous** and irrelevant to his goals.

In Design class that day, his teammate showed him two images that had struck her. "Tre, which one do you think I should use for this book: **this** first one or **that** one?" 60

"I don't know, Daija...I like the colors of the first one," he reflected, "but that subliminal ying-yang sign in the second one, and the fact that they put Black on the righteous one speaks volumes and deconstructs false concepts of Black and white." 65

His teammate smiled. Daija could always count on Tre for that deep analysis: the one thing he doesn't treat **facetiously**. As she got up, a curious thing happened. The oatmeal cookie, usually shy and wrapped up between her books, decided it would take a dive out of her bag; well, they say, curiosity always did kill the cat. Maybe it didn't suspect its fate. 70

Later on when Daija was stuck after school waiting for her dad to get there, she remembered she had that cookie her grandma had made for her. Her tummy and taste buds rumbled at the thought and settled on the wait. But her fingers couldn't find it. 75

Across the way, Tre was gleaming, knowing the recruiters had come that day. My favorite, *Tre* thought, ripping through the encasing napkin. Long time since I had one of these. He thought of that Liberal Arts magnet school all the successful artists went to in his city, Ellington - had his mind set on it since he could remember. He walked home from school that day knowing where he was headed. 80 85